

The Villa Maria Curriculum

Consistent with our tradition of offering a superior education, the Villa Maria program exceeds provincial government norms, thereby providing excellent preparation for CEGEP and university.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Strong communication skills are fundamental to every career path. For this reason, our enriched English Language Arts program builds essential skills in understanding classic and modern texts, and expressing ideas through written and oral presentations. We assign individual and collaborative projects, and encourage students to enter writing competitions and become published authors. Students at all levels enjoy regular theatre excursions, culminating in the annual Secondary V trip to the Stratford Festival.

Communicating Skills, in Secondary III, examines a variety of cultural communication modes with an emphasis on developing skills for practical and formal situations. Examples include debates, speeches, conflict resolution, interviews, active listening, and situational etiquette.

Media and Communication IV explores the limitless boundaries of media communications, including journalism, photojournalism, broadcasting, online and print media. Students will use a variety of technology to produce individual and collaborative projects.

North American Literature, optional in Secondary V, enables students to hone reading, writing and analytical skills, while developing a deep appreciation for how life and literature intersect.

Media Technology V enables students to acquire practical technology skills while also developing a critical view of the ever-more powerful medium of film. In this innovative course, students analyze and create multimedia projects, including short films, public service announcements and documentaries.

FRENCH

A core component of the Villa Maria curriculum, our French programs — *Français, langue d'enseignement* (French Mother Tongue) and *Français, langue seconde – programme enrichi* (Enriched Second Language) — prepare students for life in Quebec and anywhere in the world where familiarity with French is an asset. Our French Mother Tongue courses offer a unique opportunity for students who excel in languages and wish to further develop their French writing skills.

Apart from their regular French language classes, Villa Maria students have an opportunity to practice the language in several subjects. Music, Art and Physical Education are taught in French in Secondary I and II. Students in the French Mother Tongue program also take Geography, History and Citizenship Education, and Physical Education in French. During their five years at Villa Maria, students will attend theatre productions in French and/or meet with invited francophone authors, musicians and artists.





SPANISH

The Spanish course, offered as an option in Secondary III, is designed to enable students to develop their language ability in all four skills – speaking, listening, reading and writing. The course will provide ample opportunity to practice the language while also increasing the students' awareness of Hispanic cultures.

MATHEMATICS

Recognizing the importance of mathematics in post-secondary education and in many careers, we strive to build a strong foundation in the subject. In fact we go beyond, building confidence and encouraging a positive attitude toward mathematics in every student.

Villa Maria offers several streams to accommodate varying interests and ability in mathematics. This includes Enriched Mathematics from Secondary II to V, and three separate streams in Secondary IV and V.

SCIENCE

Teachers at Villa Maria use a rigorous and hands-on approach to make learning science a truly exhilarating experience. Our Secondary I to V program includes Science and Technology, Environmental Science, Physics and Chemistry.

TECHNOLOGY

Villa Maria students enjoy the benefits of learning in one of the best-equipped schools in Montreal. Through wired and wireless classrooms, through our computer labs and library, we integrate essential technology tools into the learning process. We also offer many opportunities for students to hone their technological skills and increase their media literacy through a range of innovative courses and activities. Our new studios and editing suites, for example, enable students to create websites, magazines, documentary videos and multi-media presentations.

We introduce students at all levels to topics encompassing the Living World, the Material World, the Technological World and Earth and Space. In the process, they acquire a real understanding of key scientific concepts that will serve them well in later years. Emphasis is also placed on the use of the scientific method to solve problems and the development of proficient use of laboratory materials and equipment.

The program in Secondary I and II covers activities which help students learn the fundamental skills and concepts that allow them to design and carry out experimental procedures. The topics presented in the Science and Technology course in Secondary III prepare students for the advanced concepts we introduce in Secondary IV and V.

Science Fairs

Villa Maria holds a school Science Fair every February and regularly sends students to the Bell Montreal Regional Science and Technology Fair. Students have gone on to successfully compete at provincial, national, and international science fairs.

SOCIAL SCIENCES

Geography / Géographie

In the Cycle One Geography program, students focus on the concept of territory, defined as a social space that human beings occupy and modify, and to which they give a specific meaning and form of organization. For students in the *Français langue d'enseignement* stream, this course is taught in French.

History and Citizenship Education / Histoire et éducation à la citoyenneté

The History and Citizenship Education program in Cycle One aims to enable students to develop their understanding of the present in light of the past and to prepare them to participate as informed citizens in the social life of a democratic society. For students in the *Français langue d'enseignement* stream, this course is taught in French in Cycle One.

The History and Citizenship Education program in Cycle Two challenges students to think critically about historical patterns, trends and developments in this century and the world. The focus in Secondary III and IV is specific to Canada's history, politics and social landscape, with a particular emphasis placed on the study of Quebec.

In Secondary V, an optional World History course illuminates the major events of the 20th and 21st centuries covering topics that defined humanity and the struggles that humankind has faced in the past one hundred years. The new Contemporary World course, also offered at this level, sheds light on the contemporary socio-political issues that are happening in the world in the present day.

Social Science (Law and Society)

In this optional Secondary IV course, students explore what it means to be an informed, participating citizen in a democratic society. They learn about the elements of democracy in local, national and global contexts, about political reactions to change, and about political decision making processes in Canada.

VISUAL ARTS

Villa Maria's unique Visual Arts program encourages students to create and interpret personal and media images, and to gain familiarity with a wide range of art forms and artists. More specifically, the program aims to develop:

- Observational skills
- Creative, technical, communicative and expressive abilities
- Personal themes and ideas
- A language associated with art and art making

Art classes at Villa Maria challenge the personality of each student, helping her discover her own potential. Each level is distinct, designed to explore diverse media and materials, and to address art history, noted artists and their techniques through class discussions.

We further enrich the program with guest speakers and cultural outings to Montreal museums and galleries. Visual Arts is compulsory in Secondary I and optional from Secondary II to IV. An art exhibition is held annually to showcase student work.

MUSIC

The study of music is a vital part of Villa Maria's curriculum and legacy. Students have two avenues open; they can choose wind orchestra in regular classroom settings or private lessons and chamber music at the Villa Maria Music School. They also have the opportunity to augment their music education with private lessons during lunchtime or after school hours.

Wind Orchestra

All Secondary I students learn to play a wind instrument as part of the Villa Maria Wind Orchestra. In Secondary II to V, wind orchestra is offered as an option, and students can choose from a variety of instruments, including flute, oboe, clarinet, saxophone, bassoon, trumpet, trombone, French horn, drums, bass guitar and percussion.

DRAMA

Our Drama program focuses on all aspects of play production: acting, set design, costumes and lighting. Character analysis, research into the historical period of the play, the rudiments of voice work, improvisation, and physical movement are explored and then used in the staging of a play. Senior students take the lead in writing, directing, and performing their own plays. All Drama students also attend local productions, developing a critical eye and appreciation of all aspects of theatre.





PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND HEALTH

This course aims to give students the tools they will need to manage their health and well-being and help students integrate physical activity in their daily lives.

Through our membership in the Greater Montreal Athletic Association, the school fields teams in:

- Softball
- Cross-country Running
- Soccer
- Basketball
- Volleyball
- Curling
- Indoor Track & Field
- Swimming
- Badminton
- Halo Road Race
- Outdoor Track & Field
- Tennis
- Touch Football

All is not intense competition, however! Through lunch-time intramural sports, students can also participate in a less competitive atmosphere. These sports include cosom hockey, indoor soccer, table tennis, ultimate frisbee, croquet and bocce.

ETHICS AND RELIGIOUS CULTURE

The Ethics and Religious Culture program is offered in Secondary I, II, IV and V. The program begins with a study of Quebec's religious heritage and ends with an introduction to other major religions of the world. In the intervening years, students examine Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism and the Islamic faith from the perspective of their similarities and differences.

PASTORAL ANIMATION

Villa Maria's unique Pastoral Animation service is designed to fulfill both individual and collective needs for meditation, prayer and worship. It covers every aspect of school life, offering opportunities to develop a personal faith. This service encourages students to ensure that meaningful commitment becomes an integral part of their daily lives.

COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY

Giving service to the community at large is encouraged whenever possible. Every September, our students participate in the Breast Cancer Walk along with six other girls' schools. Later in the year, Villa Maria students participate in the annual Walkathon, collecting funds for selected local charities.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Villa Maria endeavours to build a faith environment that fosters the development of the spiritual dimensions of the person and instills values that transcend the academics. In their interactions with teachers, parents and staff, our students learn that respect is a fundamental value essential to social peace and mutual understanding.

A compulsory community service program starting in Secondary I, along with a variety of pastoral and student life activities, allow the possibility for students to reach out to others, whatever their condition or beliefs. Specifically in the community service program, students are required to complete a minimum number of volunteer hours in each grade level, starting with ten hours over their Secondary I year and leading up to forty hours with a final project summary, to be completed over their Secondary IV and V years combined. These volunteer hours are made compulsory to help students develop social accountability and deeper self-knowledge, leading to mature and responsible citizenship.

